

NATURAL HISTORY.

Edited by S. Symth.

AMBLESIDE RE-VISITED.

I have been asked by one or two to tell them all about my visit to Ambleside, which consisted of nine days spent there in blissful enjoyment. So I daresay it will interest all of you that love the place so well to hear how I spent those few days.

My sister and I took lodgings at Mrs. Gibson's, Kelsick House, where we were very comfortable. Our sitting room looked out on to the church and that green field in which at that time there were lambs frisking about to their hearts' content. Never did time fly so quickly as those nine days. We determined to do everything on foot, and that mostly in Ambleside, as we were sure that the place could not be exhausted in so short a time.

The first day, April 15th, dawned bright and warm; the sun shone with unwonted splendour, and the trees were just green enough to make one imagine that it was summer.

The first place we went to was Dove's Nest Woods. Along the Windermere road, in that well-known wall, we found the Rue-leaved Saxifrage growing in profusion. Further on in the woods we found Wood Sorrel, white and pink. The Tway-blade Orchis was coming up and the Welsh Poppy was in bud. In the afternoon we went to Sweden Bridge in hopes of getting some Mountain Primroses, but the season was rather backward, and after some search we found they were only just coming up as was also the Butterwort.

On Easter Sunday we attended the dear old church and sat in the Wordsworth Chapel in our old places; the decorations were very beautiful. The pulpit was done with Narcissus and sprays of Green Larch, the reading desk with Daffodils and Larch. In the afternoon we went for a walk round Rydal Lake. How can I ever forget that walk; the bright sunshine, the perfect blue of the lake

under the deep azure sky, the bright green of the trees, the calm stillness of nature, all was too beautiful and too wonderful. There were Sandpipers flying about over the water, and we startled a Dipper from his haunts close by. A large Canadian Goose was walking about on the banks uttering cries of seeming uneasiness; he continued this for some time and finally stretched out his large fine wings and flew away out of our sight. During this walk I found six new flowers.

One day we trudged to Hawkshead with a few sandwiches for our bodily sustenance. The scenery was indescribably lovely, so our minds had no lack of nourishment. The birds sang to us from the trees and made us feel that truly life was sweet in that joyous spot.

In a boggy field I saw some brown stuff a hundred yards off, and on coming closer I found it to be Bog-myrtle or Sweet Gale. Growing amongst it was the little Marsh Violet, not, however, fully out. The Plover flew over our heads uttering weird shrieks, and seemed to tell us that we had no business there, but we took no notice and let them scream on. By the wayside there was a clump of Sweet Violet leaves, where we found two flowers. Soon we came within sight of Esthwaite Water, but it was yet too early for the usual bog flowers around its banks. The Lousewort was coming up and the Marsh Marigolds and Cuckoo Flower were just at their best, but with those one had to be content.

Once we visited Ferry, and took the steamer there and back. Perhaps some of you remember the hotel there, where we went and had a delicious tea in a beautiful hall which was arranged with the most æsthetic taste. The flowers during this expedition only numbered three, the Periwinkle, Red Currant, and Vernal Whitlow Grass.

My sister wished very much to find the Naked-stalked Teesdalia, a flower which is rare, and to be found on Loughrigg. So one morning, when the sun was shining brilliantly, we set out determined not to leave a stone unturned until we had found this little humble plant; however, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak," for after we had reached the top without success, and had searched the most likely places, I declared I could go no further, so my sister, who was more energetic than I, resolved to continue her search while I rested on the summit; so down I lay on the soft grass looking at Windermere's shining waters and the lovely

country around. The butterflies came dancing around me; bees buzzed in the warm air, and I felt as if I could have remained there in that peaceful place for the rest of the day and forget all the worries and cares of this life. But the time began to wear on and my sister did not return; it became later still, and she did not appear. Then I began to wonder why she did not come back, and horrible fancies flitted through my brain that she had slipped down a steep place and was lying unconscious far below me. I called and called in vain; my voice only echoed back the sound; my fears increased, and I now began to prepare to scramble down to the bottom in the direction I knew my sister had gone, when a whistle caught my ear, and on looking up, to my great relief, I saw my sister safe and sound on another little hillock some two hundred yards away, and although she had not found the Teesdalia, yet I had found her who was worth more to me than all the Teesdalias in the world.

A few days after this, Miss Hodgson kindly took us to the place where it grew, a spot quite easy of access, but as the plant is very small and growing amongst stones it was very easy to miss.

As Miss Mason and most of the Students were away at the time of our visit, we did not see anything of them till the day before we left, but when Miss Mason, Miss Hodgson, and Miss Kitching, arrived at Waterhead we were on the Pier to meet them. How glad we were to see them again! It seemed as if the happy old times had come back once more. After greetings had been exchanged we walked with Miss Hodgson to her lodgings on the Windermere road, had a cosy chat and finally left her eating her supper in the pretty little sitting room.

The next day we went to dinner at Scale How. The Students came in during the evening and we had games and music. Scale How is a splendid place with beautiful rooms, and plenty of them, but for my part I shall always love Springfield best as may some of you who lived there. I could not resist taking a good look at our old home with its sweet ivy-covered walls, and even took the liberty of trespassing in the fields adjoining, where we often used to wander in search of flowers.

And now I must not occupy any more room, but leave the dear old place, with all its pleasant remembrances, to remain as happy thoughts in our minds of bygone days.

S. SMYTH.

NOTES ON FLOWERS.

The Snowdrop is called in French *perce-niege*, and in Italian *buca-neve*, both meaning snow-piercer.

Primrose is derived from the Latin word *primus*, first, because of its flowering so early.

Daisy was formerly spelt according to its meaning, day's eye, as its flowers grow sleepy and close at evening. In Yorkshire it is called the Dog-daisy, because it was formerly believed that the juice of the leaves and root, given to little dogs, with milk, would keep them from growing large.

Gorse is also called Furze and Whin. In St. Petersburg it is cherished in the choicest greenhouses, and esteemed a precious ornament.

Coltsfoot is so called from a fancied resemblance of the leaves to the form of a colt's hoof. Wine is sometimes made from the flowers.

The young leaves of the Lesser Celandine are sometimes used as greens in Sweden.

Sweet Violets grow wild all over Europe; they are abundant in Arabia, Japan, and Barbary, and have been found in Palestine and near Canton in China. The Yellow Violet is found on Welsh mountains.

The name Dandelion was originally *Dent de Lion*, or lion's tooth, from the form of the single florets; indeed, the leaf is indented so as to bear considerable resemblance to a row of animal teeth.

Butcher's Broom was formerly used by butchers for sweeping their blocks.

Cows-lips were probably so called from the idea that as the breath of cows is sweet, their lips may be supposed to be sweet also, and so these fragrant flowers were named after them.

Ox-lip is evidently of the same origin. It is like a cowslip but larger, not so sweet-scented, not so common, and the flowers are more spread and upright.